

# **WISHA REGIONAL DIRECTIVE**

WISHA Services

Department of Labor and Industries

## **29.60**

## **FIXED LADDER**

## **GRAB BARS**

**Date: May 2, 2001**

### **I. Background**

Chapter 296-24 WAC, Part J-1, includes a variety of requirements regarding fixed ladders, including requirements related to grab bars. It also includes requirements related to guarding floor holes and hatchways. Questions have been raised regarding the need for grab bars for fixed ladders that access a roof or floor through a hatchway.

WAC 296-24-81009(4) states that "Grab bars shall be spaced by a continuation of the rung spacing when they are located in the horizontal position. Vertical grab bars shall have the same spacing as the ladder side rails. Grab-bar diameters shall be the equivalent of the round-rung diameters."

WAC 296-24-81007(5) states "The distance from the centerline of the grab bar to the nearest permanent object in back of the grab bars shall be not less than 4 inches. Grab bars shall not protrude on the climbing side beyond the rungs of the ladder which they serve."

ANSI standard A14.3 includes requirements for fixed ladders that access a roof through a hatchway.

### **II. Scope and Application**

This WISHA Regional Directive (WRD) applies to all WISHA enforcement and consultation activities involving ladder grab bars. It replaces any previous guidance on the subject, whether formal or informal.

### **III. Interpretive Guidance**

#### *A. When should employers be cited for failure to provide grab bars?*

The existing standards include no such requirement. The clearance, spacing and placement language of WAC 296-24, Part J-1 is triggered only when grab bars are in fact present – it does not require them.

ANSI standard A14.3 1956, which was used as a basis for the current Part J-1 did not require ladder grab bars for any type of fixed ladder. The current ANSI standard, A14.3 1992, does not require grab bars when the fixed ladder terminates at a hatch.

*B. How must an employer address open-hole hazards related to fixed ladders used to access a floor or roof?*

WAC 296-24-75003(3) includes specific requirements to guard ladderway floor openings or platforms, including options for protecting the entry to the ladder.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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For further information about this or other WISHA Regional Directives, you may contact WISHA Policy & Technical Services at P.O. Box 44648, Olympia, WA 98504-4648 -- or by telephone at (360)902-5503. You also may review policy information on the WISHA Website (<http://www.wa.gov/lni/wisha>).